

Nicaragua

February 27, 2008

Global Links third container to Nicaragua of 2008 is destined for the Rio San Juan region along the southern border with Costa Rica. This area has received two other shipments from Global Links in recent years, and provides wonderful feedback so that we can send precisely what is needed and be assured of its utility. This container will benefit six health centers as well as the main 40-bed hospital of the region.

To illustrate some of the challenges faced by the population in this remote area, Global Links program officer Patti Skillin describes one community, San Juan del Norte, comprised of 1,445 people along the Atlantic Coast. The people of San Juan del Norte earn their living, which is barely enough, through agriculture, fishing, and handicrafts. In their needs assessment in 2007, they told Ms. Skillin that last year was the first year that secondary education was even available in their town, and so they are proudly working on creating the first generation of high school graduates from their community. As for access to health care - the best way to reach this community is by boat, and the next large town, where the hospital is located, is 190 km away, or 10 hours by public transportation. To complicate matters even more, the boat that makes that trip only does it twice a week - Tuesdays and Fridays. This greatly complicates the ability to refer and transfer gravely ill patients to higher levels of care in a timely fashion. Many of their patients are sent to neighboring Costa Rica, because it is easier to access.

Global Links is proud to be providing San Juan del Norte's health center with gynecological exam tables, a pediatric exam table, two manual crank beds, utility carts, infant scales, and over 50 boxes of urgently requested medical supplies including such important materials as ambus, blood pressure units, stethoscopes, and vaginal speculums.

The 40-foot container held furnishings and a total of 579 boxes of similar supplies for the other health centers.

Also of note, this donation included four dental chairs with water and suction units, lights, and dentist chairs. Dental chairs were the top priority of four of the six health centers, and we were happy we could meet this critical need.

This shipment is a great example of bringing key medical materials, even the most basic of materials, to those communities that need it the most.